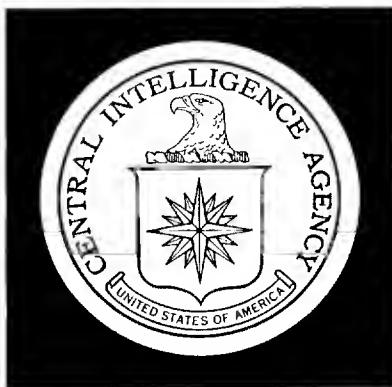


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Cambodia: Phnom Penh has concluded a trade agreement with the Viet Cong. (Page 2)

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Cambodia: Phnom Penh has concluded a trade agreement with the Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG), but there is no indication that it signals an early resumption of the arms flow through Cambodia.

Chief of State Sihanouk came to terms with the Communists on a "commercial treaty" during last week's visit in Hanoi, according to a Phnom Penh announcement.

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The Communists have been pressing for a formal trade agreement to cover the purchase of nonmilitary supplies since Sihanouk placed an embargo on all supply shipments last May. The Communists presumably hope that this agreement will ease their difficulties with the Cambodians by legitimizing the semicovert supply flow that has been taking place.

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The Communists apparently have kept trade agreement negotiations distinct from the question of the embargo on military shipments to the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces. It is quite possible, however, that the latter problem figured prominently in Sihanouk's decision to conclude a trade agreement. Sihanouk may view the trade agreement as a conciliatory gesture to compensate for his waywardness in refusing to live up to the promises he made to Phat to permit the resumption of the arms and ammunition flow.

Sihanouk may also regard the trade agreement as part of a future deal, perhaps discussed in Hanoi, that would cover the problem of Communist bases on Cambodian soil as well as the supply question.

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